

**Former PLA Recreation Ground, The Drive, Ilford,
London Borough of Redbridge**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for CgMs Ltd

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FPL06

May 2006

Summary

Site name: Former PLA Recreation Ground, The Drive, Ilford, LB Redbridge

Grid reference: TQ 4260 8785

Site activity: Field Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th–19th May 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: FPL06

Area of site: 2.25 ha

Summary of results: No deposits of archaeological interest were observed. A few struck flints of possible later prehistoric date were recovered from the spoilheap of one trench. It is concluded that the archaeological potential of the site is very low.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course, with accession code FPL06.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston ✓ 24.05.06
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Former PLA Recreation Ground, The Drive, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 06/60

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out the Former Port of London Authority Recreation Ground, The Drive, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge (TQ 4260 8785) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting, Morley House, 26 Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2AT.

Planning permission is to be sought from the London Borough of Redbridge to redevelop the site as a school. The proposed school buildings are to occupy the south-west portion of the site currently occupied by the now derelict former sports facilities (c.2.25ha). The remainder of the site is to remain as sports fields. A programme of archaeological works has been requested by Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, the archaeological adviser to the Borough, to provide information on the archaeological potential of the site in order to mitigate the impact of the development on any remains that may be present. In the first instance this involves an evaluation to ascertain if any archaeology is present. A requirement for any further fieldwork would be dependent upon the results of the evaluation.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification prepared by Ms Lorraine Darton of CgMs Consulting and approved by Mr David Divers, of Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford and Jenny Ryder in May 2006, and the TVAS project code is FPL06/60. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London in due course, with accession code FPL06. The TVAS project code is FPL06/60.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a relatively flat parcel of land located on a terrace of the River Roding which lies 0.5km to the west and feeds the River Thames. The site lies within the suburbs of Ilford and is surrounded by semi-detached properties. The site as a whole is mostly an area of disused playing fields with the built facilities occupying the south-west corner. These are derelict and comprise a social hall, changing facilities, a caretaker's house, bowling

green and tennis courts. According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1974), the underlying geology consists of river gravel (Boyn Hill terrace) locally termed the Orsett Heath Gravel (Wymer 1999, map 10) and this was observed during the field evaluation. The site lies at a height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Darton 2005). In summary, the site lies on a terrace of the River Thames, which is a topographic zone considered as archaeologically rich (MoLAS 2000; Williams and Brown 1999). However, relatively few sites or finds are recorded for the environs of the proposal area though an 18th-century mausoleum was located on the site and was levelled c. 1923.

The gravel outcrop on which the site lies is the Boyn Hill terrace which has been associated with finds of Palaeolithic date and a number of finds have been recovered from gravel working just to the north of the site (Wymer 1999, map 10). However, the relevant level for *in-situ* Palaeolithic material is likely to lie beneath the gravel at a depth of several metres, and is unlikely to be affected by the development proposals.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of the project are :

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site given that parts of the site have been previously developed;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine the depth at which the archaeologically relevant levels are present on the site.

To achieve these aims it was proposed to excavate four trenches, three at 50m long and one at 30m long, nominally 2m wide. They were to be dug using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. A contingency was allowed for further trenching if needed, to clarify any initial findings. If any features of archaeological, or potentially archaeological, interest were present, the trenches were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and the features planned and sufficient of them excavated to satisfy the aims of the project. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds. Allowance was made for sampling deposits of environmental potential.

The trench details are summarized in Appendix 1.

Results

Five trenches were eventually dug ranging in length between 15.1m and 59m. The extra length was a response to the use of the standard 1.6m wide bucket used on JCB-type machines.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3)

This trench was 34.5m long aligned approximately NE–SW within the area of the former bowling green. It was 0.63m deep and the stratigraphy comprised 0.18m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.27m of sand and clinker forming the green sub-base. This overlay 0.13m of subsoil which comprised a grey/brown silty sand with some gravel which overlay the natural gravel. The latter comprised pea grit with orange sand.

A shallow linear feature cutting the gravel was investigated but found to contain clinker and tile and is therefore of recent date. A shallow circular feature was also investigated and also found to contain a modern brick fragment.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 3)

This trench was 38m long aligned approximately west east. It was 0.62m deep and the stratigraphy comprised 0.15m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.33m of subsoil which comprised a grey/brown silty sand with some gravel which overlay the natural gravel. A modern post with *in-situ* wood was found at the south west end of the trench.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3, Plate 1)

This trench was 59m long aligned approximately SW–NE. It was 0.51m deep and the stratigraphy comprised 0.09m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.33m of subsoil which comprised a grey/brown silty sand with some gravel which overlay the natural gravel. An area of modern disturbance with some brickwork and a circular feature contained a fragment of brick were noted for this trench.

Two struck flints were recovered from the spoilheap at the south-western end of the trench.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 3)

This trench was 54.6m long aligned approximately SW–NE. It was 0.57m deep and the stratigraphy comprised 0.12m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.41m of subsoil which comprised a grey/brown silty sand with some gravel which overlay the natural gravel. Some modern disturbance, possibly decayed roots or animal burrows was noted in this trench.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 and 3, Plate 2)

This trench was 15.1m long aligned approximately north-south and lay within the area of the former bowling green. It was 0.78m deep and the stratigraphy comprised 0.17m of turf and topsoil overlying 0.17m of sand and clinker forming the green sub-base. This overlay 0.4m of subsoil which comprised a grey/brown silty sand with some gravel which overlay the natural gravel.

Finds

Struck flint by Steve Ford

Two struck flints were recovered from the south-western end of the spoil heap of Trench 2. The two flakes are not closely datable but are likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. However, there is a possibility that they are of more recent origin and may have been created accidentally such as during ploughing.

Conclusion

The trenching on this site encountered no features of archaeological significance. It did reveal two struck flints from a search of the trench spoilheaps that are possibly of prehistoric origin, though there is some doubt as to their authenticity. Even if these finds are of prehistoric date, they are likely to represent no more than casual loss or discard and reflect no more than widespread use of the landscape at that time and are of minimal archaeological significance. No finds of Palaeolithic date were revealed. On the basis of these results therefore, the site appears to have very low archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 257, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Darton, L, 2005, 'Former PLA site, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge', CgMs Consulting, London
- MoLAS, 2000, *The archaeology of Greater London; an assessment of archaeological evidence for human presence in the area now covered by Greater London* Museum of London Archaeology Service Monogr PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Williams, J and Brown, N (eds), 1999, *An Archaeological Research Framework for the Greater Thames Estuary*, Chelmsford
- Wymer, J J, 1999, *The Lower Palaeolithic occupation of Britain*, Salisbury

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	34.5	1.6	0.63	0-0.18m turf/topsoil; 0.18-0.45m made ground (bowling green formation layer); 0.45-0.58m greyish brown silty sand with gravel subsoil; 0.58m+ natural gravel. Modern linear feature at 16m and circular patch at 24m. No archaeology
2	38.0	1.6	0.62	0-0.15m turf/topsoil; 0.15-0.48 greyish brown silty sand with gravel subsoil; 0.48m+ natural gravel. Modern post at 1m. No archaeology
3	59.0	1.6	0.51	0-0.09m turf/topsoil; 0.09-0.42 greyish brown silty sand with gravel subsoil; 0.42m+ natural gravel. Modern disturbance at 9m and modern circular patch at 23m. No archaeology [Plate 1]
4	54.6	1.6	0.57	0-0.12m turf/topsoil; 0.12-0.538 greyish brown silty sand with gravel subsoil; 0.53m+ natural gravel. Modern disturbance at 30m. No archaeology
5	15.1	1.6	0.78	0-0.17m turf/topsoil; 0.17-0.34m made ground (bowling green formation layer); 0.34-0.74m greyish brown silty sand with gravel subsoil; 0.74m+ natural gravel. No archaeology [Plate 2]

APPENDIX 2: OASiS Summary Form



Project name	Former PLA recreation ground, The Drive, Ilford
Short description of the project	Trial trenching revealed no archaeological features. Two unstratified struck flints may be of prehistoric date but their authenticity is questionable.
Project dates	Start: 18-05-2006 End: 19-05-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	FPL06/60 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	FPL06 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Significant Finds	STRUCK FLINTS Uncertain
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Public building (e.g. school, church, hospital, medical centre, law courts etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Pre-application



Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON REDBRIDGE ILFORD Former PLA recreation ground, The Drive, Ilford
Study area	2.25 Hectares
National grid reference	TQ 4260 8785 Point
Height OD	Min: 24.00m Max: 24.00m



Name of Organisation	Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Steve Ford

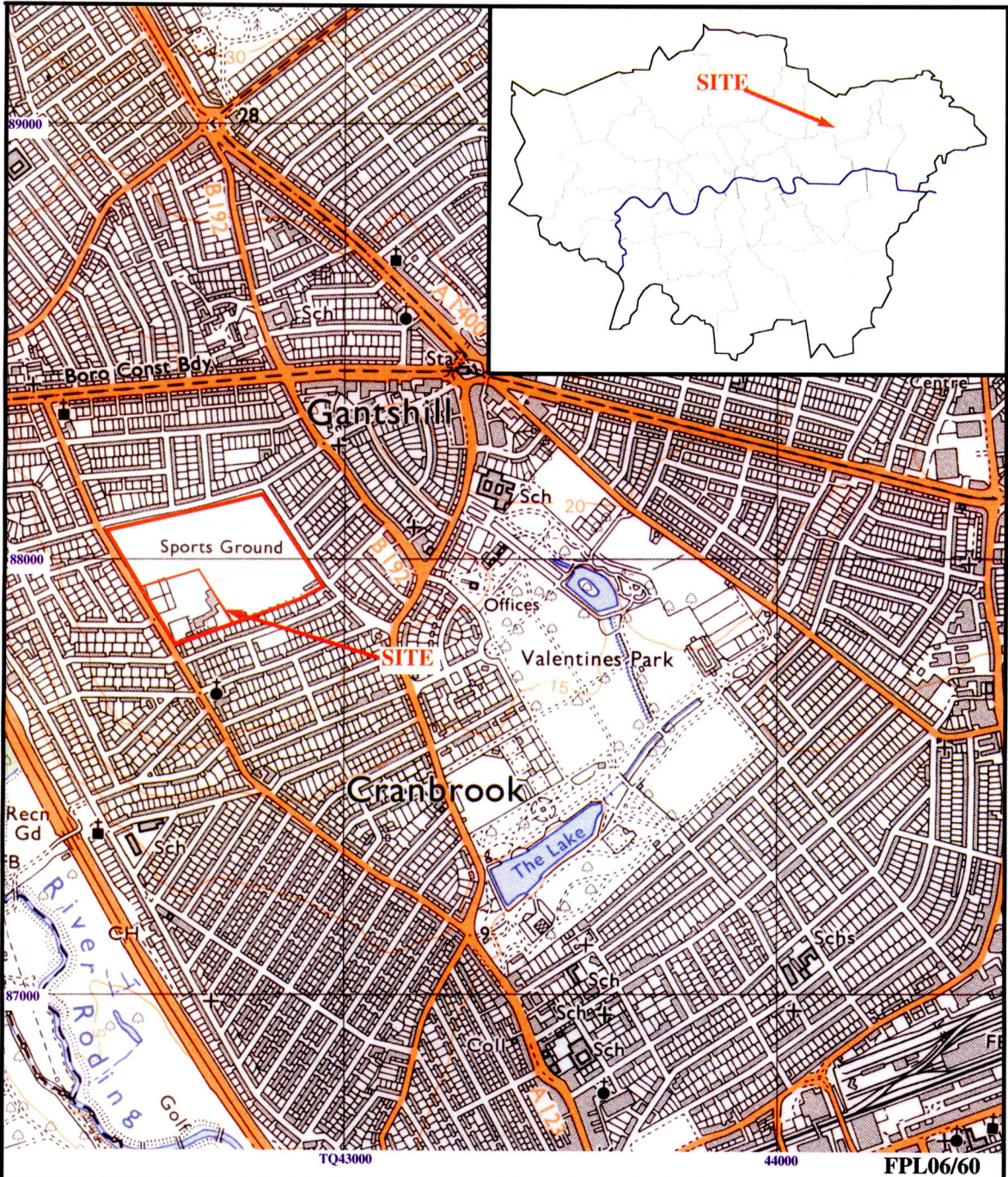
Project supervisor Steve Ford
 Sponsor or funding body Developer

Physical Archive recipient Museum of London
 Physical Archive ID FPL06
 Physical Contents 'Worked stone/lithics'
 Physical Archive notes temporarily with TVAS in Reading pending deposition
 Digital Archive Exists? No
 Paper Archive recipient Museum of London
 Paper Archive ID FPL06
 Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic','Worked stone/lithics'
 Paper Media available 'Correspondence','Map','Microfilm','Miscellaneous Material','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section','Survey'
 Paper Archive notes temporarily with TVAS in Reading pending deposition

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title Former PLA recreation ground, The Drive, Ilford, London Borough of Redbridge; an archaeological evaluation
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Ford, S
 Other bibliographic details 06/60
 Date 2006
 Issuer or publisher Thames Valley Archaeological Services
 Place of issue or publication Reading
 Description A4 comb-bound client report

Entered by Steve Ford (tvas@tvas.co.uk)
 Entered on 24 May 2006

Please e-mail tvas@tvas.co.uk for OASIS help and advice
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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Ilford and Greater London.

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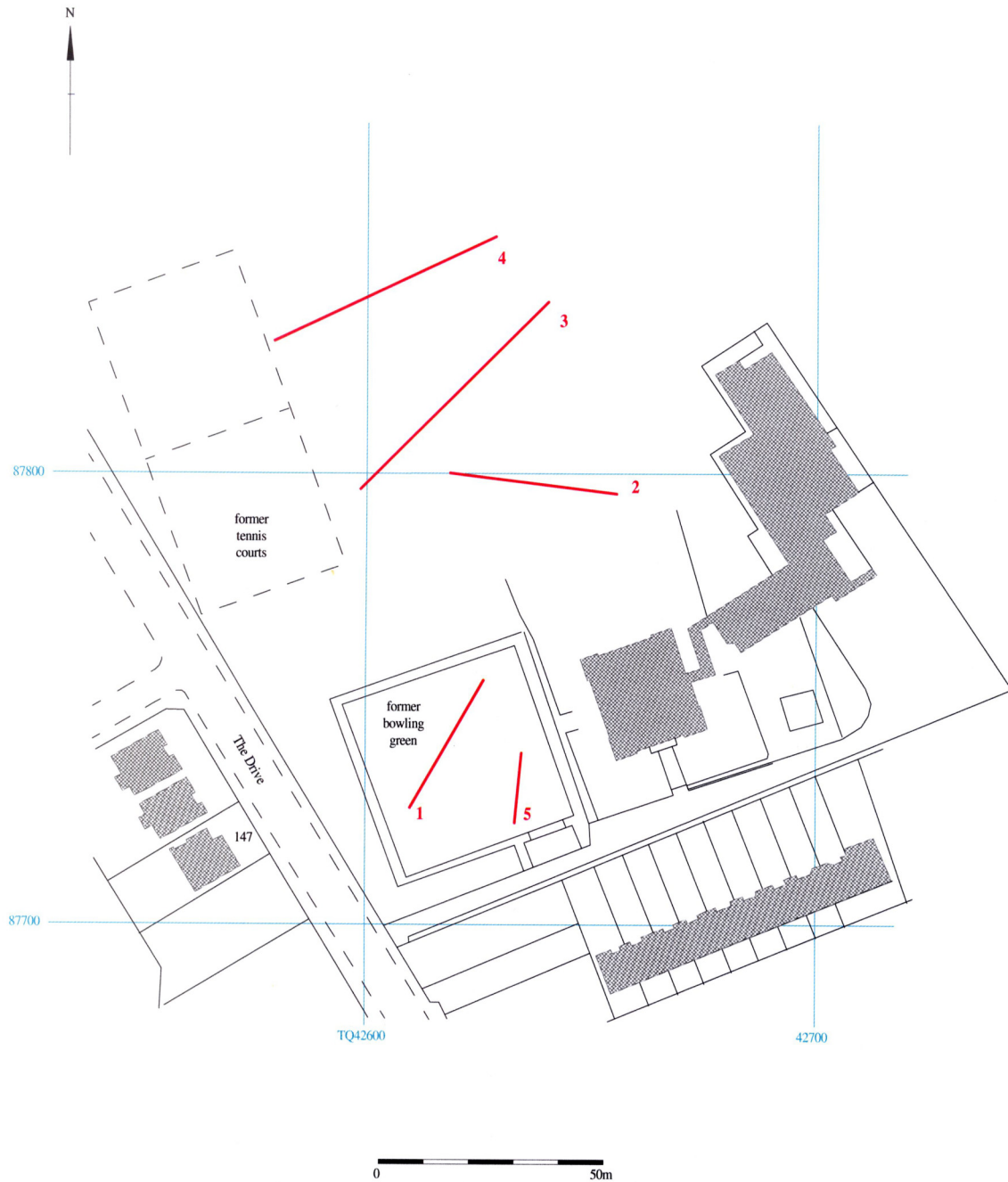


Figure 2. Location of trenches.

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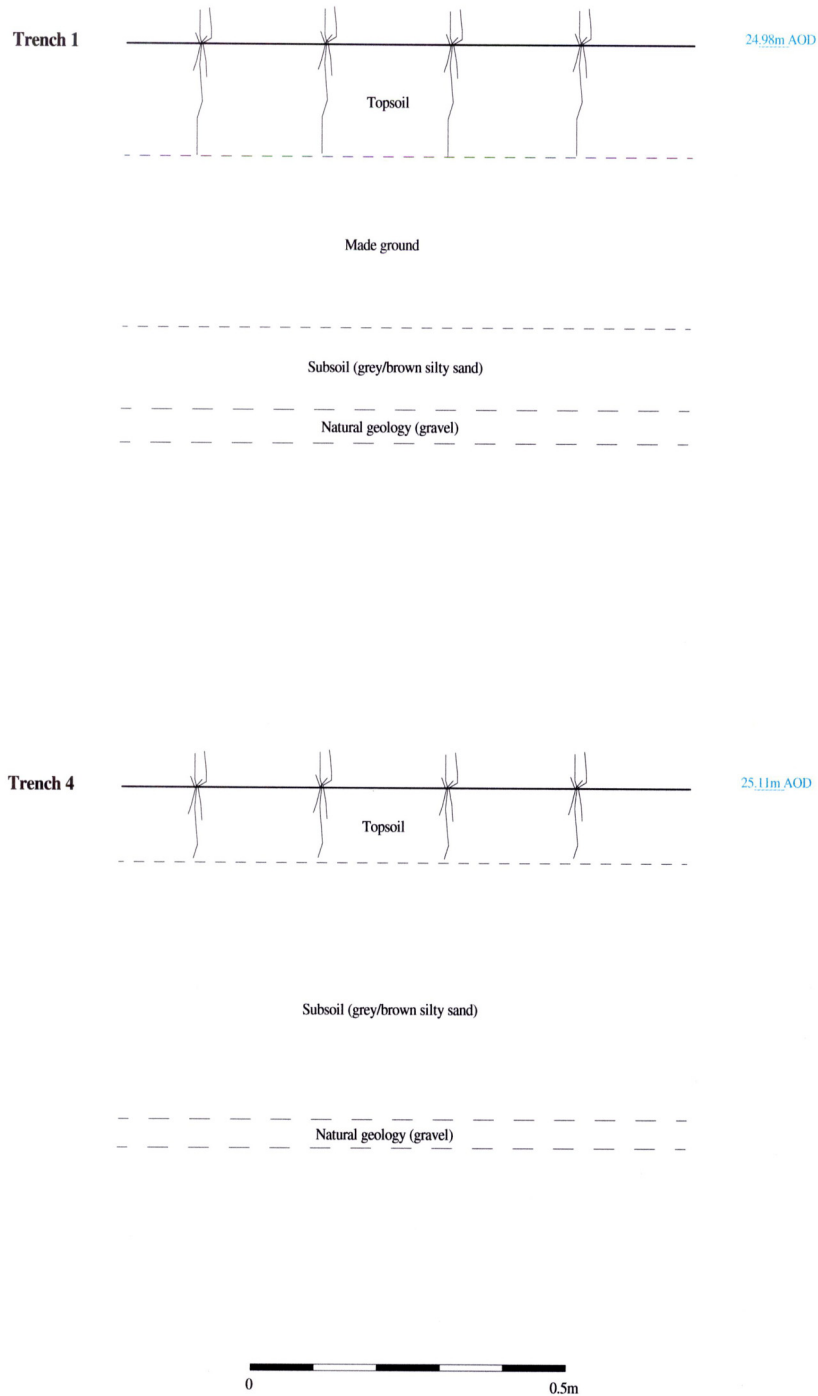


Figure 4. Representative sections of trenches 1 and 4.



Plate 1. Trench 3 looking north east, vertical scale 0.3m, horizontal scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 5 looking north, vertical scale 0.3m, horizontal scale 1m.